

Planning & Government

**Montgomery
County,
2025**



Adopted: 10/12/04

Government & Government: Executive Summary

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The Planning and Government chapter provides the backbone of Montgomery County, 2025 because it defines many of the central themes expressed by the citizen participants during the three year input process leading up to this plan. These themes include cooperation, participation, information, and education.

The Government and Planning Goals cover six main issues:

- Local and regional cooperation;
- Citizen participation;
- Public access, including meeting ADA requirements and providing mixed use facilities;
- Planning for villages and small communities;
- Planning for corridors; and
- Tax structure, legislative priorities, and the impact of growth.

Planning and Government: Introduction

Community Survey Results

The community survey asked participants to rank five planning and government issues: public involvement, public outreach, e-government, local cooperation, and regional cooperation.

Participants gave “public involvement” the highest mean score (3.99) of the five government related issues, with 76% ranking it as either important (34%) or very important (42%). Only 5% of those who responded said it was either minimally important (4%) or not important (1%). Those involved in civic (50%), religious (64%), and government (50%) organizations were more likely to rank public involvement as very important than were those involved in educational (37%), geographic (43%), or commercial (21%) organizations or enterprises. Respondents who had previously participated in the comprehensive planning process were more likely to rank “public involvement” as very important (53%) than were those participating for the first time (42%).

Participants expressed a wide range of views and offer an equally wide range of solutions when it came to public involvement. Their suggestions included: “aggressive solicitation for citizens’ help,” creating more public involvement activities, increasing the amount of publicity for local issues, establishing citizen review boards, conducting educational programs, and creating innovative public forum opportunities to reach and educate community members. One participant noted that the County needs to “foster the flow of info, citizen involvement, and access to government and officials.” Another wrote, echoing others, that

Note: There are two planning chapters: Planning and Land Use, which deals with planning and land use policies, and this chapter, Planning and Government, which addresses planning practice and process.

the government needed to “listen to the public,” noting that “people quit voicing opinions and participating because most decisions are already made or actually decided by the more assertive.”

Closely related to public involvement was the issue of government communication, outreach, education, and information. Participants gave it a mean score of 3.79, with 70% of respondents ranking it as either important (35%) or very important (35%). Very few of the participants rated it as either minimally important (4%) or not important (1%).

Many of the comments related to government communication, outreach, education, and information were either similar

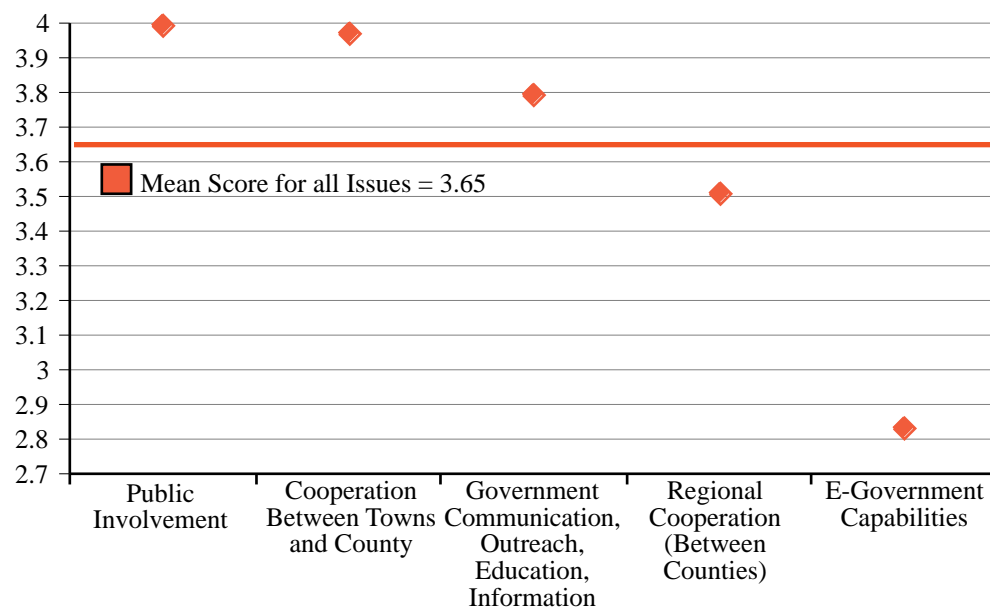
to those provided for public involvement or were embedded in comments dealing with other subjects. For example, a number of participants suggested that the County needed to provide public information and access to programs to a diverse range of groups: farmers, students, environmentalists, developers, and so on. Participants suggested a broad variety of public information solutions, from developing or upgrading an online GIS, to distributing information about wells and septic systems to home owners, to providing transportation maps, with the bike lanes and bus stops marked, through the public libraries and Chambers of Commerce.

E-government, one approach to both public



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Planning and Government Issues Community Survey Results, 2003



	Mean Score
Public Involvement	3.99
Cooperation Between Towns and County	3.97
Government Communication, Outreach, Education, Information	3.79
Regional Cooperation (Between Counties)	3.51
E-Government Capabilities	2.83
Mean Score for All Issues	3.65

Note: Forty-one issues were included in the “rate this issue in terms of importance” portion of the community survey. A mean score was calculated for each of the 41 issues, as well as for the total of all issues. Issues with scores higher than 3.65 (the mean for all issues) indicate that the majority of respondents rated the issue greater importance; a score lower than 3.65 indicates that the majority of respondents rated the issue of less importance than the on average. The scale for the survey was: 0=no response; 1= not important; 2=minimally important; 3=moderately important; 4=important; and 5=very important. Source: 2003 Community Survey, Montgomery County, Virginia.

involvement and public information generated the least support (mean score of 2.83) of all 41 issues, with the largest percentage of respondents (34%) ranking it as “moderately important,” as compared to 34% ranking it either as important (22%) or very important (11%). In some respects, the response to the e-government issue was surprising given the amount of support for both public involvement and public information. The result, however, may reflect a lack of understanding of the term “e-government” by participants.

The last two issues included in the community survey dealt with government cooperation at the local and regional levels. Of the two, local cooperation generated a higher mean score (3.97) than did regional cooperation (3.51), with 75% of participants ranking “local government” as either important (31%) or very important (44%). A lower percentage (57%) ranked regional cooperation as either important (25%) or “very important (32%). Interestingly, support for both local and regional cooperation was higher among Blacksburg residents (80%) than among residents from either Christiansburg (72% for local and 58% for regional) or Montgomery County (72% for local and 50% for regional), although all three jurisdictions showed significant support for cooperative efforts between jurisdictions. Only 5% of respondents felt that local cooperation was either minimally important or not important. and 11% gave regional cooperation the same rankings.

Citizen comments underscored their interest in seeing the local and regional governments work together as a “team.” Participants noted that they wanted to see better and more productive relationships between Montgomery County, Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Radford, and Virginia Tech, and they offered a number of suggestions, including: “refining cooperative guidelines between the County and towns;” and improving cooperative approaches to planning and zoning.

In their comments, participants addressed a much broader range of issues in than those raised



in the survey, including: providing assessments on the character and quality of the County government, the tax structure, and the planning and governing process. Judging from the written comments, participants want the planning and governing process to be progressive, forward thinking, practice “out of the box thinking”, “be willing to change, to look at ...things differently, have a vision,” and “develop [plans] based on consensus and sustainability.”

Some of the participants felt the County needed to be both more open with and more accountable and responsible to the citizens. One participant wrote that there should be an “eradication of labels like Republican and Democrat in government--everyone should work together for the betterment of the people & environment of Montgomery County...”

Survey participants also commented on the need for greater diversity in the planning and governing process. A number of participants noted that the County needed to increase minority representation in the schools, local government, and other institutions, expressing a concern that issues of diversity were not being adequately addressed.

Of all of the issues raised in the government portion of the survey, none were more polarizing than the issue of taxes. While a number of participants felt that property taxes were too high or needed to be “kept at a reasonable cost,”

more participants wrote that the County should raise taxes, but only if necessary and fair. Participants noted, particularly, that the County should “set [the] tax structure to support the goals,” “raising fair taxes to support projects,” “consider changing the taxing methods,” “provide a tax credit for first time home buyers,” and have a more “equitable and enforceable tax” structure. As with the comments about the quality and character of government, participants felt that the monies they put into the county system should be wisely and responsibly spent.

Current and Historical Trends and Conditions

Rezoning

On the whole, rezonings remained reasonably constant between 1990 and 2003,

fluctuating between a low of four (4) in 1992 and a high of 17 in 1990 and 2000, with an average of 12 rezonings per year.

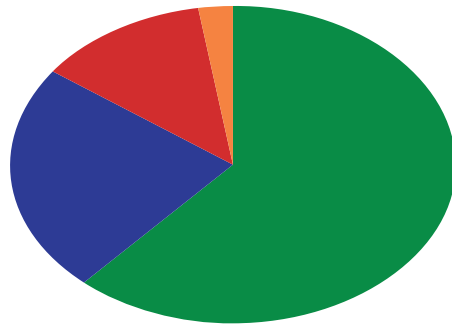
In rezonings, Montgomery County lost, at a minimum, 2,686 acres of agriculturally zone land and 185 acres of conservation zoned lands in the years from 1988 to 2002. Of the rezoned land, 64.2% was used for residential purposes: 61.7% for subdivisions; and 2.5% for planned manufactured housing parks. The remaining 35.8% was used for industrial (12.5%) and commercial (23.3%) uses.

It should be noted, however, that the acreage change in A-1 zoning does not accurately reflect the loss of agricultural lands in Montgomery County. According to the USDA’s 1997 Agricultural Census, Montgomery County lost 5,840 acres of agricultural lands in the years between 1992 and 1997, representing a decrease of 5.9%. Prior to 1999, one-half acre lot

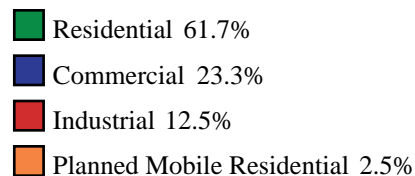
Major Planning Efforts: 1990-2004

1990	County adopts Comprehensive Plan
1990	177 Corridor planning process begins
1990	Work begins on the Huckleberry Trail
1991	County begins Capital Improvements Program (CIP)
1993	County adopts revised Subdivision Ordinance
1994	Rte 177 Corridor Overlay adopted
1996	Work on begins on revision Zoning Ordinance
1998	Review and Revision of 177 Corridor Plan begins (PDC)
1998	Montgomery County joins the Appalachian Regional Commission
1998	County is awarded a Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development Community Improvement Grant to fund the installation of a sewer system in Belview.
1999	Huckleberry Trail Completed (Blacksburg Library to New River Valley Mall)
1999	Work begins on the Coal Mining Heritage Park Master Plan (Radford University). Completed in 2000.
1999	County adopts revised Zoning Ordinance, including Sliding Scale
2000	County begins work on a new Geographic Information System
2000	Work begins on the new Comprehensive Plan
2001	County adopts a new Regional Telecommunications Plan
2002	County and the Free Clinic are awarded a CDBG grant to redevelop a former county office building for use by the Free Clinic. (Completed 2004)
2002	Work begins on the Community Facilitators Initiative and Community Survey. (Completed, 2003; wins VAPA award for outstanding public awareness, 2004)

Montgomery County: Rezoned Land Uses, 1988-2002



Number of Acres Rezoned



Acreage

Residential	1775.49
Commercial	671.33
Industrial	359.3
Planned Mobile Residential	71.54

Source: Montgomery County Planning Department, 2004.

subdivisions were allowed, by-right in agriculture (A1). Additional agricultural and forestal lands were lost to “by right” residential development (most notably, along Brush Mountain) in the Agricultural (A-1) and Conservation (C-1) districts prior to the introduction of sliding scale zoning in the 1999 zoning ordinance. While major subdivisions accounted for 18.6% of the loss and rezonings accounted for 25.7% of the loss, the majority of the loss came from minor and family subdivisions (55.7%).

Subdivisions:

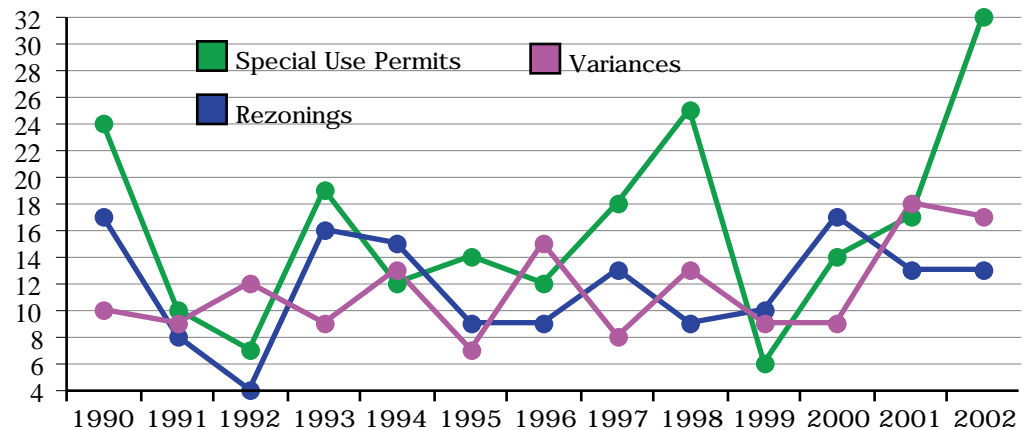
Until the 1993 revision of the subdivision ordinance, the County had no effective mechanism for tracking the subdivision of land. While plat approval was required for major subdivisions, including by-right subdivisions, plat approval was not required for minor or family subdivisions prior to 1993. Since 1993, major subdivisions have accounted for 6.3% of new subdivisions and 21.4% of new lots. Minor and family subdivisions make up the rest. In

the same years, minor subdivisions accounted for 57% of all subdivisions and 42% of all new lots. Family subdivisions accounted for 36% of subdivisions, while creating 20% of all new lots. Since 1993, over 13,000 acres of land have been subdivided.

Building Permits and Distribution of Manufactured Housing:

Between 1990 and 2003, Montgomery County issued 5,039 “new construction”

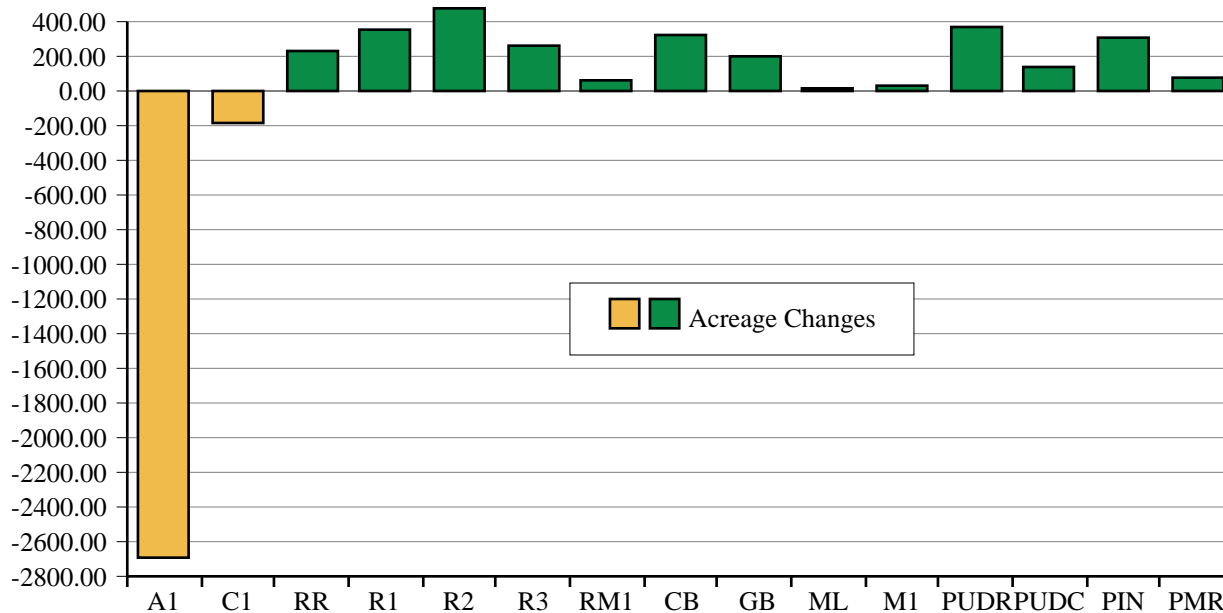
Montgomery County: Rezonings, Special Use Permits, 1990-2003



	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Special Use Permits	24	10	7	19	12	14	12
Rezonings	17	8	4	16	15	9	9
Variances	10	9	12	9	13	7	15
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Special Use Permits	18	25	6	14	17	32	
Rezonings	13	9	10	17	13	13	
Variances	8	13	9	9	18	17	

Note: The new Zoning Ordinance required a special use permit for accessory structures over 850 sq. ft. and 16 ft. in height. While the requirements have since been changed to allow larger accessory structures, they still account for ___% of the special use permits between 2000 and 2003.
Source: Montgomery County Planning Department, 2003.

Montgomery County: Rezoning, Changes in Acreage, 1988-2002



Notes:

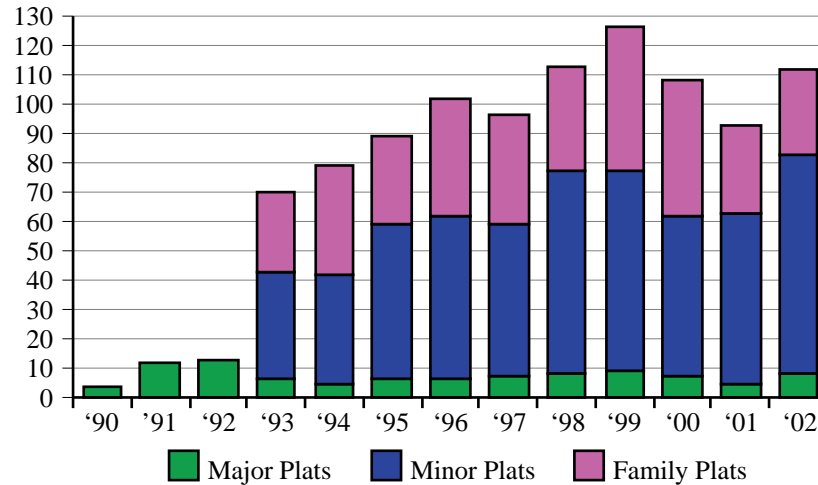
1. The rural residential (RR) and light manufacturing (ML) zones were introduced in the 1999 Zoning Ordinance.

	A1	C1	RR	R1	R2	R3	RM1	CB	GB	ML	M1	PUDR	PUDC	PIN	PMR
1988	-163.48			77.40	15.61	70.85			-0.38						
1989	-289.17			43.93		34.62	0.67		53.44		36.20			118.30	
1990	-44.18	-169.80			47.32	111.86	19.62	2.00	0.58						32.60
1991	-13.36					1.44	1.12		10.77						
1992	-65.80			55.00	2.90	4.40	-2.00		5.60						
1993	-221.40				10.10	5.60	28.00		36.40		-30.20			155.00	
1994	-87.00			-241.00	110.50			186.50	4.30		2.00				24.70
1995	-56.10			13.90	29.40			1.00	12.60						
1996	-742.20			353.70	363.30			3.60	12.80		2.90				6.00
1997	-394.00	-15.40			34.40	20.60		119.00	5.00		16.90	215.00			-1.30
1998	-245.70			42.70	-6.60	2.40	0.40		57.20		0.60	103.00	23.00	40.00	6.10
1999	-16.90				0.67	9.54			5.98						
2000	-105.64		21.02		17.24			1.49	11.78			52.41			1.69
2001	-8.50				-2.49	2.50	11.35	1.21	-8.86	4.21					
2002	-232.54		204.62	9.00	-122.71		2.20	9.58	-3.26	13.34			120.00		1.75

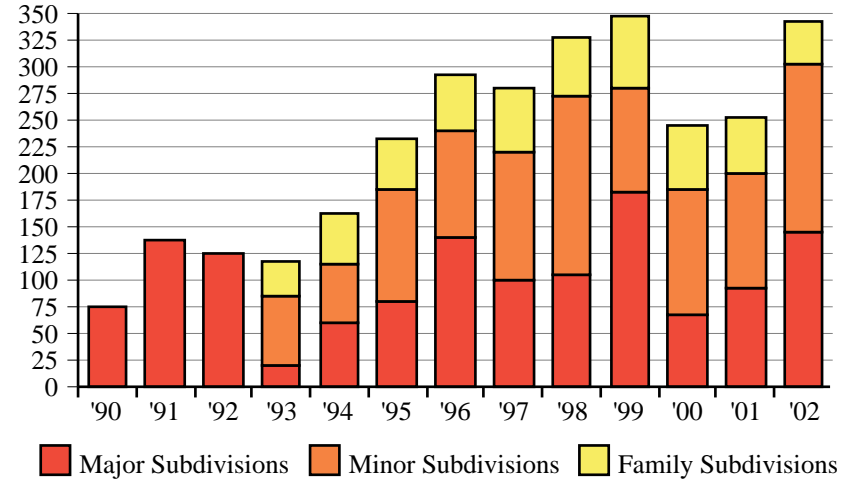
Source: Montgomery County Planning Department, 2004

Montgomery County: Subdivisions, 1990-2003

Montgomery County: Recorded Plats, 1990-2002



Montgomery County: New Lots, 1990-2002



	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Total
Major Plats	4	12	13	6	5	6	6	7	8	9	7	5	8	67
Number of Lots	76	138	124	21	59	80	139	99	104	182	67	93	146	990
Acreage	47	215	178	344	392	142	343	567	139	346	274	177	239	2,963
Minor Plats				37	37	53	56	52	69	68	55	58	75	560
Number of Lots				64	57	106	101	122	168	99	118	108	157	1,100
Acreage				223	256	500	368	1402	882	366	408	504	1436	6,345
Family Plats				27	37	30	40	37	36	49	46	30	29	361
Number of Lots				32	47	46	52	60	56	66	59	51	39	508
Acreage				88	472	227	189	840	329	196	180	263	223	3,007
Total Plats	4	12	13	212	163	232	292	96	113	126	108	93	112	1,547
Total Lots	76	138	124	117	163	232	292	281	328	347	244	252	342	2,598
Total Acreage	47	215	178	655	1120	869	900	2809	1350	908	862	944	1898	12,315

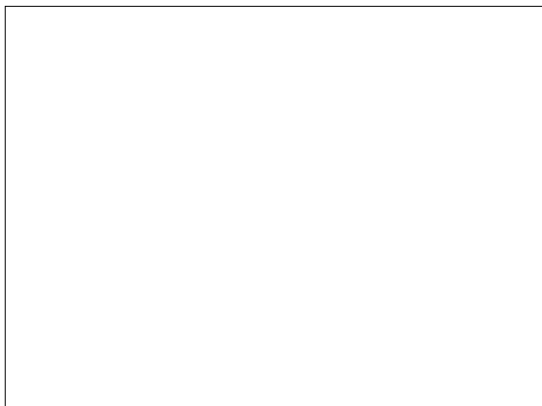
Notes:

1. Prior to the adoption of the new subdivision ordinance in January, 1993, only major subdivisions had to be signed by the subdivision agent.
3. Combination lots have been added to the minor subdivision category in this table.

Source: Montgomery County Planning Department, 2003

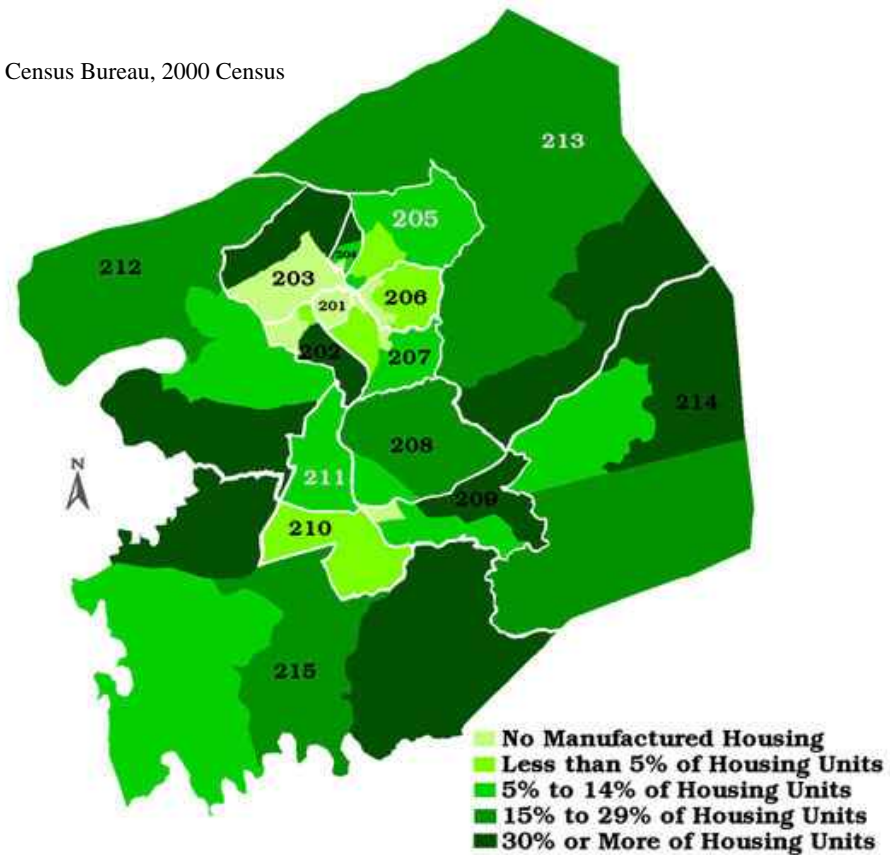
building permits, including 2,274 permits for single-family and multi-family residential construction (41.4%) and 2,518 permits for the installation of manufactured housing (49.9%). Of the permits issued for manufactured housing, an average of 47.6% (1996-2003) were for replacement units, while 52.4% were new units on new lots. It should be noted that the majority of new manufactured housing units installed between 1996 and 2003 were located on new lots not located in manufactured housing parks; although in recent years, the trend, at least for single-wides, has reversed. Since 2000, 67% of single-wides have been placed on new lots in manufactured housing developments, while 90% of double-and triple-wides have been placed on new, privately owned lots.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the highest concentrations of manufactured housing are in eastern Montgomery County; the Belview, Plum Creek, and Bethel areas in the western portion of the County; the Pilot, Rogers and Sugar Grove areas of in the southern end of the County; and two areas adjacent to Blacksburg (Merrimac and Brush Mountain). Although the Census indicated that Shawsville and the Elliston/Lafayette areas had some of the highest concentrations of manufactured housing (as a percentage of the total number of housing units) in Virginia, building permit evidence suggests



Montgomery County: Distribution of Manufactured Housing,

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census



that the concentration in the village of Plum Creek is much higher (Plum Creek was not included as a separate community in the 2000 Census).

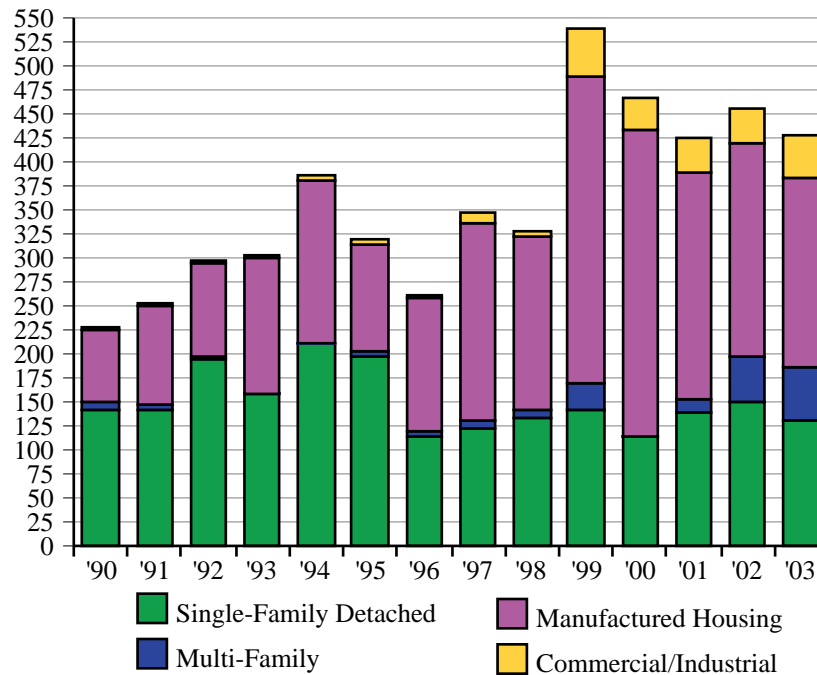
Since 2000, of the 463 new manufactured housing units installed in Montgomery County, 39% (181 units) were installed in the Belview/ Plum Creek/ Bethel area (Census Tracts 212 and 215). In the same period of time, 28 new units, on new lots, were located in manufactured housing parks in Shawsville; and no new units, on new lots, were added in parks in either

Elliston or Lafayette. A total of 56 new units were placed on private lots in the same area (Census Tracts 213 and 214--Alleghany Springs, Denhill, Elliston/Lafayette, Ironto, and Shawsville). Of the new units on private lots, half were single-wides and half were either double- or triple-wides.

Special Use Permits

Since 1990, Montgomery County has approved 122 special use permits. Prior to the

Montgomery County: Building Permits, 1990-2003



Montgomery County: Manufactured Housing, New and Replacement, 1996-2003

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Average
New	52.5%	55.9%	53.1%	51.2%	47.8%	57.4%	49.3%	52.3%	52.4%
Replacement	47.5%	44.1%	46.9%	48.8%	52.2%	42.6%	50.7%	47.7%	47.6%

Montgomery County: New Construction and Manufactured Housing Permits, 1990-2003

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total
Single-Family Detached	141	141	194	157	211	198	115	123	134	141	113	140	151	131	2,090
Multi-Family	8	5	2	2	1	4	5	7	7	28	1	14	45	55	184
Manufactured Housing	75	103	99	142	168	111	138	207	181	319	319	236	224	196	2,518
Commercial/Industrial	5	4	1	3	6	6	4	9	6	52	35	34	36	46	247

Montgomery County: Total Building Permits, Excluding Reinspections, 1999-2003

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total
Single Family Detached	141	113	140	151	131	676
Single Family Attached	19	0	12	45	42	118
Duplex	9	1	2	0	13	25
Multi-Family	0	0	0	0	0	0
Modular	31	22	38	27	34	152
Mfg. Single-wide	185	154	125	134	109	707
Mfg. Double-wide	103	59	70	62	53	347
Mfg. Triple-wide	0	1	3	1	0	5
Commercial & Gov.	52	35	34	36	46	203
Accessory	88	70	83	58	55	354
Alterations	76	82	87	89	64	398
Additions	88	94	103	97	90	472
Towers	3	19	12	2	4	40
Miscellaneous.	10	18	9	28	7	72
	805	668	718	730	648	3569

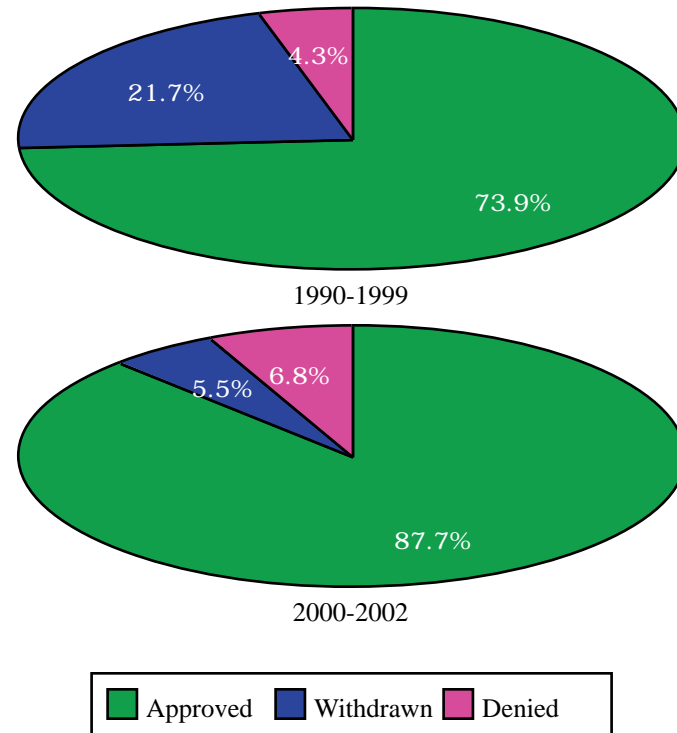
Notes:

1. The Multi-Family category in the New Construction table includes multi-family, duplexes, and single-family attached residential housing. The three categories were not tracked separately until 1999.
2. The manufactured housing data on both tables includes new and replacement single-wides, double-wides, triple-wides, and modular units.
3. Since 1999, the commercial and industrial permits category includes all permits issued to commercial, industrial, and institutional uses, which accounts for the increase in commercial and industrial permits.

Source: Montgomery County Planning Department, 2004

Special Use Permits: Types of Uses, 1990-2002

	Approved by Planning Commission	Approved by Board of Supervisors
Accessory Structures	15	15
Agricultural/Garden Enterprise	3	3
Amusement/Recreation	11	10
Auto Repair/Service/Storage	13	13
Cluster Overlay/ Development	2	2
Commercial/Retail	5	5
Contractor's Storage Yard	9	9
Fraternity/Sorority	3	4
Government Requests	4	4
Home Occupation	3	4
Hospital/Medical	3	3
Industrial	3	3
Manufactured Housing Parks	7	9
Professional Office	6	6
Residential/Residential PUD	6	6
Resort/Bed and Breakfast	2	2
Senior Housing/Facilities	2	2
Storage	4	4
Telecommunication Towers	13	14
Miscellaneous	4	4
	118	122



Note: Since the passage of the 1999 Zoning Ordinance, accessory structures requiring an SUP have accounted for 22.7% of all special use permits.

Source: Montgomery County Planning Department, 2003

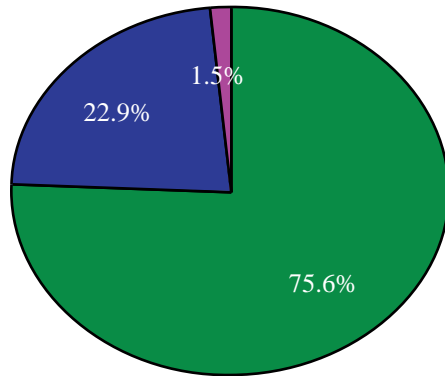
passage of the new zoning ordinance in 1999, 73.9% of special use permits were approved; after passage, that percentage went up to 87.7%. The difference between the two approval rates, however, is misleading. The list of special uses, included in the new zoning ordinance, was amended, in 2001, to include accessory structures larger than 850 square feet (since amended to 1200 square feet and 18 feet in height). In 2001

and 2002, the County had 49 special use permit requests of which 30.6% were for accessory structures (primarily private garages). Excluding accessory structures, the two uses that garnered the most requests between 1990 and 2002, were for telecommunications towers (11.4%) and automotive repair and service establishments (10.6%).

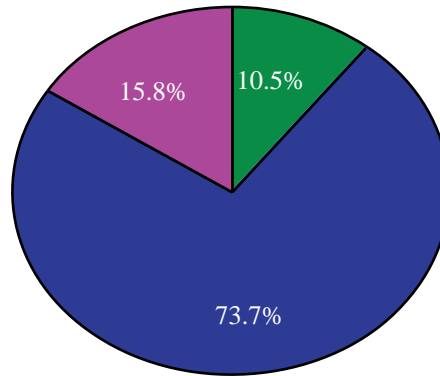
Zoning Variances and Appeals

Between 1990 and 2002, the Board of Zoning Appeals dealt with 131 variance requests and 19 appeals. While the majority of variances were granted (75.5%), the majority of appeals were denied (73.7%). Of the requests for variances, 77% dealt with setbacks and/or required yards.

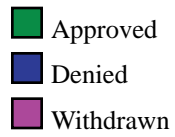
Montgomery County: Zoning Variances, 1990-2002



Variances



Appeals



	Variances	Appeals
Approved	99	2
Denied	30	14
Withdrawn	2	3
Totals	131	19

Note: Variance Requests which asked for more than one variance (i.e. floodplain and setback, etc.) were counted in each category, but only one variance. Because of this, the total on the table below will not match the table to the left.

Source: Montgomery County Planning Department, 2004

Montgomery County: Board of Zoning Appeals, Types of Variances, 1990-2002

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Total
Density													3	3
Floodplain	1		1				1			1				4
Lot Size/Coverage	1				1		1		1			2		6
Miscellaneous			1		1			1					1	4
Parking	3		1											4
Replacement (Mfg.)												1	3	4
Road Access (VDoT)											1	1		2
Setbacks/Required Yards	4	11	9	8	10	5	13	4	10	8	8	6	5	101
Use					2							1		3
Unclassified												6		6

One key method of gauging civic involvement is by examining the voting patterns in local elections. While this works for the towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg, which hold their town elections in May, it does not work when examining local voting patterns at the County level. County elections are part of the General Election held in November, always in combination with federal and/or state elections. Voter participation rises, depending on the level of government being considered: the highest levels of participation occur during federal elections; the lowest during local elections.

In Montgomery County, voter participation (as a percentage of the registered population) peaked in 1992 when 42% of residents 18 and older registered and 85% of registered voters went to the polls. Voter participation has since declined: in 1996 34% of eligible voters registered and, of those, 74% voted in the presidential election. By 2000, the number of registered voters, who voted, dropped to 66.5%.

Statewide General Elections have followed the same pattern. In 1994, voter participation peaked at 74% and have since followed a steady decline. In the 2002 election, voter participation was at 42% (although 1999 marked the low point at 41.7%). Statewide elections which involve US Senate and House races generate greater turnout than those elections which have no federal connection. The one exception to this are Governors races.

Local elections, however, do not follow the same pattern, but voter turnout is significantly lower, ranging from a high of 20.9% in the 2002 Christiansburg General Town Election to a low of 3.25% in the 1998 Blacksburg General Town Election. Overall, the average turnout for Town General Elections has been 15.3%. It is assumed that county-wide participation in County elections would be similar if they were held separately from the state and federal elections.

In 1992, Montgomery County held a special election on the proposed revenue sharing

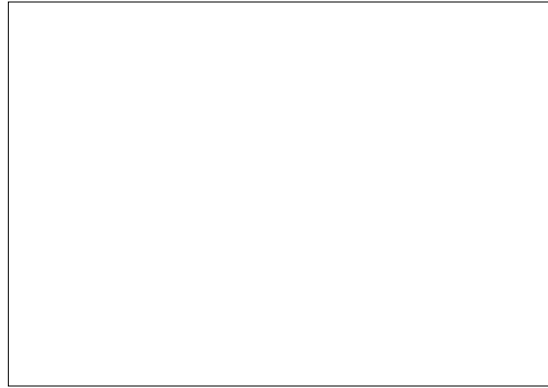
Montgomery County: Voter Participation, 1984-2002

	Number of Registered Voters	Number Who Voted	% Voting
1984 (P)	24154	19954	82.6%
1985 (G)	23601	13680	58.0%
1986(G)	23439	11814	50.4%
1987(G)	23583	13539	57.4%
1988(P)	26764	21668	81.0%
1989(G)	25326	17449	71.0%
1990(G)(L)	25339	11570	45.8%
1991(G)(L)	25967	10853	59.0%
1992(P)(G)(L)	29343	25028	85.0%
1993(G)(L)	28699	20024	70.0%
1994(G)	29584	21183	72.0%
1995(G)(L)	30088	18081	62.0%
1996(P)(G)	33030	23371	74.0%
1997(G)(L)	35899	17861	49.7%
1998(G)	37582	16620	44.2%
1999(G)(L)	38374	16009	41.7%
2000(P)(G)	41063	27318	66.5%
2001(G)(L)	41689	20154	48.3%
2002(G)	42616	17927	42.0%

Note:

1. (P) Federal/Presidential Elections; (G) Statewide, General Elections; (L) Local/County Elections.
2. Local General Town Elections were excluded from the above list of elections, although they do provide a benchmark for determining voter participation in local elections. Turnout in local elections, from 1988 to 2003, ranged from a low of 3.25% to a high of 20.9%.
3. The number of registered voters is far lower than the number of eligible voters (residents age 18 and older). In 1992, the peak year, 42% of eligible voters were actually registered. That number dropped to 29% by 1997.

Source: Montgomery County Voter Registrar, 2003



referendum for the 177 Corridor Overlay District. Voter participation, for that election, was 8%.

Public Information

In 1999, Montgomery County hired their first Director of Public Information and established an Office of Public information. In the years since, the County has significantly increased the

amount of information available to the public, primarily through the implementation of an e-government website, which provides the public with direct access to a wide range of documents, including reports, plans, and minutes, as well as the more traditional press releases. In addition, the Board of Supervisors meetings are being broadcast on the public access station in Blacksburg.

Geographic Information System (GIS)

Although Montgomery County has had electronic mapping since the late 1980s, the County's Geographic Information System (GIS) is a fairly recent development and is currently under construction. The County is in the process of integrating geographic, building permit, and land use data into a single package, which, when completed, will significantly increase the overall effectiveness of planning and land use analysis and streamline development and construction in the County.

Additional Planning Information

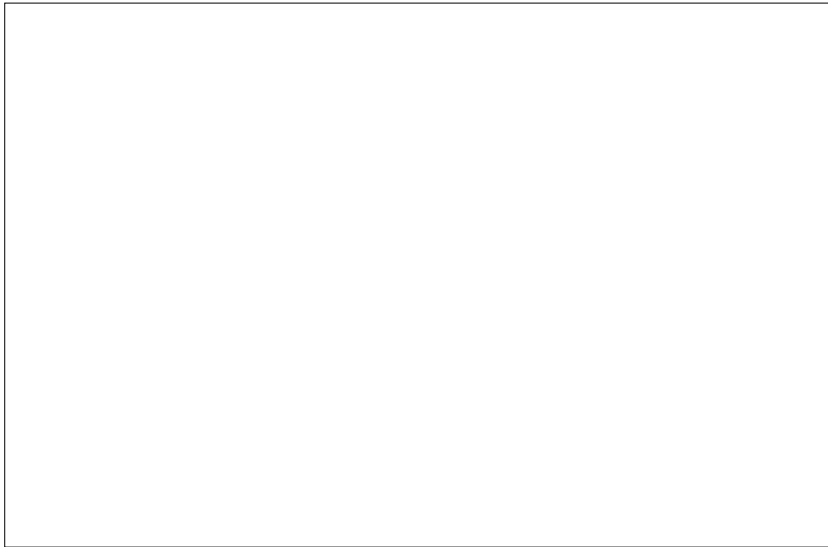
Currently, planning information takes three forms: 1) the Planning Commission public hearing packets, available from the County's website; 2) the Planning Commission newsletter, *News and Notes*; and 3) the development and distribution of planning and zoning technical data sheets.

Local and Regional Cooperation.

Montgomery County belongs to the New River Valley Planning District Commission, and, more recently, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) with Blacksburg and Christiansburg. Over the past decade, the County has worked on a number of significant cooperative efforts, including: the Montgomery Regional Solid Waste Authority (MRSWA), the Regional Approach to Telecommunications Towers agreement, the New River Valley Commerce Park, and the Huckleberry Trail.

Government and Planning: Goals

PNG 1.0 Local and Regional Cooperation: Think regionally in order to better provide public goods and services more efficiently and effectively. In many cases this will involve the County working cooperatively with the two towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg and possibly Virginia Tech. In other cases this will involve the County working cooperatively on a regional basis with other New River Valley governments (Radford, Floyd County, Giles County and/or Pulaski County) and possibly local governments in the Roanoke Valley. (1)



Cross References and Notes

: 1. Local and regional cooperation are built into the full extent of this plan. Significant sections addressing local and regional cooperation are included the following: PLU 1.8.6 Municipal Coordination & Cooperation (pg. 47) CRS 1.0 Historic Preservation (pg.81); CRS 3.0 Cultural Facilities and Fine Arts (pg.83); ECD 2.0 Workforce Development (pg.100); ECD 3.0 Location and Land Use (pg.101); EDU 2.0 Lifelong Learning Goal (pg.117); ENV 3.0 Streams, Rivers, and Surface Waters (pg.141); ENV 4.0 Floodplains (pg.143); HHS 3.0 Regional Cooperation and Collaboration (pg.176); HSG 1.1 Affordable Housing (pg.189); PRC 1.0 Regional Cooperation and Collaboration (pg.206); SFY 1.5 Regional Opportunities (pg.198); TRN 1.2 Metropolitan Planning Organization (pg.219); TRN 2.0 Highway System (pg.221); TRN 3.0 Mass Transit (pg.223); TRN 4.0 Alternative Transportation (pg.224); UTL 1.1 Regional Cooperation (pg.234); UTL 2.2 Telecommunications Towers (pg.236); UTL 3.0 Solid Waste Management (pg.237); UTL 4.0 Stormwater Management (pg.237); and UTL 4.2 Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (pg.237)

PNG 2.0 Citizen Participation: Increase citizen participation in local government and provide more opportunities for public service. (2)

PNG 2.1 Involving the Public: Promote more active citizen involvement in the local government process through the use of innovative approaches and increased education and outreach. (3)

PNG 2.1.1 Citizen Review: Use Citizen Advisory Committees (CACs) to study and evaluate issues and advise local government decision makers.

PNG 2.1.2 Neighborhood Networks: Use of neighborhood networks as a tool for providing neighborhoods review and input on planning projects, public input into county issues, and requests to both the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

PNG 2.1.3 Community Facilitators Program. Use the Community Facilitators' Program, established under the comprehensive planning process to provide citizens greater input into county issues.

PNG 2.1.4 Community-Based Meetings: Organize community-based meetings, in partnership with existing community organizations, to inform and educate people on the issues and to seek their input. Community-based meetings should be held at different geographic locations around the county.

Cross References and Notes:

2. As with local and regional cooperation, public participation is one of the keystones of *Montgomery County, 2025*. Public participation is divided into two subcategories: public involvement (input) and public information (outreach).
3. Beyond the outreach methods incorporated under this goal, the plan includes a number of other methods in the introduction, planning, and subject specific chapters. These include: PLU 1.7.1 Village Planning Process (pg. 43); CRS 1.0 Historic Preservation (pg. 81); CRS 3.0 Cultural Facilities and Fine Arts (pg.83); ECD 1.1 Montgomery County Regional Indicators Program (pg.); ECD 2.0 Workforce Development (pg.100); EDU 2.0 Lifelong Learning Goal (pg.117); ENV 3.0 Streams, Rivers, and Surface Waters (pg.141); ENV 5.0 Groundwater (pg.144); HSG 1.0 Livable Neighborhoods (pg.189); SFY1.0 Public Safety (pg.197); TRN 1.0 Land Use and Transportation (pg.219); and UTL 3.0 Solid Waste (pg.237).

PNG 2.1.5 Public Hearings. Hold joint public hearings with the Blacksburg Planning Commission or the Christiansburg Planning Commission on projects impacting both the county and the town.

PNG 2.2 Informing the Public: Inform citizens about how local government works, how local government interacts with state and federal government, and how they can make their views known to local government decision makers.

PNG 2.2.1 Public Information: Provide information on local government in plain language and in a variety of formats. Address a diverse population using speakers, newsletters and mailings, newspapers, television (network and cable), radio, and internet (web page and CD-ROM), etc. In addition, the County should provide access to all public information through the public libraries, both in print and electronic media.

PNG 2.2.2 Planner in the Public Schools: Design and implement a Planner/ Government Official in the Public Schools program in order to promote a better understanding of planning and zoning issues, government in general, and local government in particular, in the public schools. (5)

PNG 2.2.3 Citizen Academies: Use of citizen academies as a tool for informing the public about how local government works. (6)

Cross References and Notes:

4. Most, although not all, of the goals included in *Montgomery County, 2025* have a public information component. In some cases, the specific approaches require the generation and distribution of materials; in other cases the specific approach requires distribution of existing materials available from other agencies. While most public information developed by Montgomery County originates from Office of Public Information, subject specific information (planning, zoning, parks and recreation, etc.) is also available from the specific departments.

5. The program would require working with the Social Science and Science coordinators for the Montgomery County Public Schools to design programs and classroom materials which would enhance students' understanding of local issues while working within the existing Standards of Learning framework.

6. Citizen Academies are currently used by the Sheriff's Department, although the approach could be used to increase interest in other areas of government, including planning, parks and recreation, and water quality and monitoring. Citizen academies are designed to provide members of the general public with a broader range of training and knowledge, while increasing the public's understanding and interaction with different parts of the governmental process.

PNG 3.0 Access: Provide increased public access to existing facilities (schools, libraries, etc.) and to new facilities. New and rehabilitated facilities should be designed to accommodate several functions, such as gyms and meeting rooms, and be compliant with all applicable Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

PNG 3.1 Multi-use of Facilities. Develop and adopt a countywide policy for the multi-use of public facilities, including those owned by county government, parks and recreation, the Montgomery/Floyd Regional Library, and the Montgomery County Public Schools. (7)

PNG 3.1.1 Multi-use Agreements. Develop and adopt an agreement on the multi-use of publicly owned facilities (government buildings, libraries, schools, fire and rescue squad stations, and parks and recreational facilities) by individuals and community-based organizations, including standardized use regulations, policies, and fee structures.

PNG 3.1.2 Centralized Scheduling. Appoint a taskforce to study the feasibility of centralized, countywide scheduling of use of publicly owned facilities, including government buildings, libraries, schools, fire and rescue squad stations, and parks and recreational facilities.

PNG 3.1.3 New Facilities. Require that all new facilities be designed in such a way as to promote and accommodate multi-use by individuals, government agencies, and community-based organizations, in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), in order to facilitate the provision of human, health, recreation, and government services through a

Cross References and Notes:

7. Multi-use of public facilities recognizes that the public's ability to use public facilities in a variety of fashions contains long-term costs while providing the public with greater opportunity, whether it is adult education and job training classes being held in the public library, schools making use of outdoor lab facilities in public parks, or parks and recreation programs utilizing school facilities. Multi-use of facilities is addressed in CRS 2.0 Montgomery Floyd Regional Library (pg.82); EDU 1.1.2 Facilities Renewal Program (pg.116); EDU 1.2.2 New Facilities (pg.116); and EDU 2.2 Nontraditional Educational Facilities (pg.117).

PNG 3.1.4 Community-Based Schools and Public Facilities Initiative. Study the feasibility of implementing the Community-based Schools and Public Facilities initiative, based on the Florida and West Virginia models, which allows for the provision of government, health and human service based services through the rural schools and public facilities (Elliston-Lafayette, Shawsville, Riner, Belview, and Prices Fork). (8)

PNG 4.0 Villages and Rural Communities: Retain the viability and character of villages and rural communities found throughout the County. (9)

PNG 4.1 Planning Process: Involve residents of villages and rural communities in proactively planning for their future. Village and community residents need to be informed of planning tools such as "mixed uses" and "cluster development" in order that they can decide what may or may not be appropriate for their village/community.

PNG 4.1.1 Livable Communities. Develop policies which encourage the adoption of Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) (10) and other design guidelines into the design process in order to maintain and produce livable communities. These principles provide a framework for and a greater potential benefit from cluster, mixed use, and planned unit development, especially in the context of villages and small communities. (11)

Cross References and Notes:

9. *Montgomery County, 2025* includes six designated villages: Belview, Elliston/Lafayette, Plum Creek, Prices Fork, Riner, and Shawsville. The village plans will become part of the this plan as they are adopted. Village planning is also addressed in PLU 1.7.1: Village Planning Process (pg.43). Other village and rural community issues are included in CRS 1.0 Historic Preservation (pg.81); EDU 1.1.1 Local and Neighborhood Facilities (pg.116); and PRC 2.0 Recreational Facilities and Programs (pg.207).

10. Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) standards are addressed, in greater detail, in PLU 3.0 Community Design (pg. 67)

11. Livable neighborhoods and communities are central to residents' quality of life. Potential ideas for consideration include: 1. Maintain a clear edge with the countryside (delineate gateways, consider open space buffers, encourage infill development), 2. Build livable communities (compact form encourages walking, reassess zoning standards regarding setbacks and mixed uses), 3. Preserve historic resources (find new uses for old buildings), 4. Respect local character in new construction (ask franchises and chain stores to fit in, landscape commercial areas, control signs, disguise communication towers), and 5. Reduce the impact of the car (design streets for healthy neighborhoods, build trails and greenways, reassess road standards). Source: "Better Models for Development in Virginia" by Edward T. McMahon. Livable neighborhoods and communities area also addressed in HHS 1.0 Livable Communities (pg. 176); HHS 2.0 Quality of Life (pg.175); and HSG 1.0 Livable Neighborhoods (pg.189).

Cross References and Notes:

8. The Community-Based Schools and Public Facilities Initiative is also addressed in the Educational Resources Chapter (EDU 1.2, pg.116).

PNG 4.1.2 Planning for Villages: Formulate a planning process whereby the County will jointly work with the residents of each village to prepare a village plan to guide their future development. Each village plan would be amended to the countywide Comprehensive Plan. (12)

PNG 4.1.3 Planning for Rural Communities: Formulate a planning process where by rural communities may apply to the County for assistance in preparing a community plan to guide their future development. (13)

PNG 4.2 Public Facilities: Locate new public facilities (schools, parks, ballfields, libraries, fire & rescue stations, collection sites, satellite offices, etc.) where they contribute to the viability and livability of established villages and rural communities.

PNG 4.3 Zoning Changes: Review and revise the Zoning Ordinance in order to support the future development of villages and small communities.

PNG 5.0 Corridor Planning: Identify areas of the county with unique growth characteristics that are appropriate for corridor planning and plan for them using the VA 177/Tyler Avenue Corridor plan as a model. (14)

PNG 6.0 Tax Structure and Legislative Changes and Priorities : Reduce County dependence on the local real estate tax, while expanding local control of land use decisions and opportunities.

PNG 6.1 Legislative Priorities: Work with the Virginia Association of Counties (VaCo) and the Virginia Municipal League (VML) in their efforts to diversify the revenue sources available to local governments, while expanding local control of land use decisions and opportunities.

PNG 6.1.1 Planning and Code of Virginia. Conduct a review of land use related laws included in the Code of Virginia, updated annually, to determine the impact of changes on local land use practices and regulations.

PNG 6.1.1 Planning and Legislative Priorities. Work with the Board of Supervisors and County Administration to expand planning-based options in Montgomery County, including transfer of development rights, an adequate public facilities ordinance, and other innovative planning tools.

PNG 7.0 Growth Impact: Use financial options, including cash proffers, as a way to encourage new development to pay its "fair share" for the impacts of capital facilities costs associated with new development.

PNG 7.1 Cash Proffers: Develop cash proffer guidelines to address County capital facility needs such as schools, parks, libraries and fire & rescue facilities. (15)

PNG 7.2 Capital Improvements Program (CIP): Continue practice of annually developing a five-year CIP to identify future capital facility needs and the means for funding them. (16)

PNG 7.3 Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO): Support state legislative efforts to allow local governments to approve APFOs.

Cross References and Notes:

12. See footnote #8 for additional references.

13. Examples of rural communities in the county are Alleghany Springs, Ellett, Long Shop, Lusters Gate, McCoy, Pilot, Graysontown, etc. Planning and Rural Communities is addressed in PLU 1.3 (pg.37).

14. Corridor Planning is also addressed in PLU 1.8.1 Corridor Planning (pg.45), and TRN 2.4 Access Management (pg.222).

Cross References and Notes:

15. Preliminary proffer guidelines are addressed in PLU 2.2 (pg. 48)

16. Capital Improvements Program is also addressed in the Implementation Strategies portion of the Introduction to the full plan; EDU 1.1.3 Facilities Renewal Program (pg.116); PRC 2.1.2 Recreational Priorities and Funding (pg.207); and SFY 1.3.2 Capital Facilities and Funding (pg.198).